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# *Speaking from the Stomach?* Ventriloquised Ethnocentrisms about Finnish Education

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**Abstract**

In recent years the words 'Finnish education' are accompanied by utterances of 'an education miracle', 'the best education system', 'a success' and a number of other adjectives and superlatives to 'describe' education in Finland. While Finland's PISA ranking has declined media interest and discourses on 'Finnish education' have not relented. Seemingly, Finland's educational system is as popular as it has ever been. Finland's education system is viewed with 'international admiration' yet behind these discourses are a number of discursive contradictions. Using the discursive concept of ventriloquism (Tannen, 2010; Cooren, 2014) we show how 'Finnish education' has become ventriloquised – when 'Finnish education' is uttered a number of automatically generated responses are uttered by speakers. In this sense, discourses on 'the success of the Finnish education system' act as prevailing meta-discourses. We argue that, behind these constructs, can too easily lie ventriloquised discourses reinforcing and (re)producing Finnish ethnocentrisms, intercultural ignorance and a lack of regard for the other. Through analysing the discourses of specific educators and academics on 'Finnish education' we show that behind the 'hype' and meta-discourses on the Finnish education system lie possible sentiments of (hidden) ethnocentrisms, (hidden) xenophobia, and (hidden) racism.

**Keywords:** ventriloquism; Finland; education; ethnocentrisms; heteroglossia; Othering.

## The 'miracles' of Finnish education

In recent times, the Finnish education system has been 'described' through a number of adjectives, media articles have focused on 'the

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magic' (*Forbes*, 2016), 'miracle' (*Harvard Political Review*, 2015) and 'successes' (LA Times, 2016) of Finnish education. A quick search engine query on Finnish education documents Finnish education as having 'the schools of tomorrow' (*Washington Post*, 2016), the educational 'benchmark' (*The Southland Times*, 2016), a global leader whereby other counties can 'learn from Finland' (*Daily Herald*, 2016; *The Huffington Post*, 2016; *The Advertiser*, 2016) and, 'a country that makes good teachers' (*Economist*, 2016). Finland's 'high ranking' in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reports on global education between 2000 and 2009 (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2004; OECD, 2007; OECD, 2010) serve as the foundation for discourses on the 'popularity' of Finnish education.

Global discourses on Finnish education have coincided with, and contributed to, increased scholarly interest in Finland's educational system (for example, Sahlberg, 2011a). A number of commentators inside and outside of Finland have added to the interest in Finnish education and have supplemented the PISA reports with 'academic rigor' (For example; Sahlberg, 2011b).

One cannot be naïve to the wider context which surrounds Finnish education. This includes the export led strategy by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (MinEdu, 2010), whereby Finnish education is seen as 'part of the global service economy' (MinEdu, 2010, p. 3). 'Competition' and 'a good reputation' are singled out as key factors in 'developing Finland as an education-based economy' (MinEdu, 2010, p. 3). In recent publications, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has described its education system as 'vital capital' (MinEdu, 2016) and its teachers as 'very independent' (MinEdu, 2014).

As Kapferer (2012, p. 2) argues "whether they like it or not, (countries) act *de facto* as a brand – a summary of unique values and benefits". The role of 'Finnish nation branding' and Finnish education 'as an economic export' has been discussed by Dervin (2015a), Schatz et al. (2015) whereby Finnish education can be viewed through the context of an economically orientated export strategy (Kantola & Kettunen, 2012). In addition, the role of Finnish higher education export strategies (Schatz, 2016) has contributed to a vast amount of discourses on Finnish education creating an 'educational hegemonic position' (Varjo et al., 2013) and an educational 'hyper-brand' (Dervin, 2015a). Spring (2014) notes the role of Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) (such as The World Bank and the OECD) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (such as Human Rights education organisations) and the 'Neoliberal' ideologies being forced upon education systems.

The effects of PISA cannot be separated from the contextual forces of Neoliberalism upon global educational systems throughout the world (for example, Hall et al., 2015; Savage et al., 2013) which has implications for social justice and the organisation of society (Rezai-Rashti et al., 2016). 'The globalisation of education' has resulted in increased global inequalities (Zajda, 2015; Connell, 2013), notwithstanding, the confusions and challenges of implementing global educational reforms (O'Leary & Wood, 2016). Since the advent of the PISA media 'phenomenon' educators and scholars have begun to see beyond the 'hype', for instance, Biesta (2015) indicates the deeper theoretical and practical consequences from an overt focus on 'numbers', 'measurements' and 'comparisons' in education.

PISA as a discursive construct has been problematised in relation to the ways PISA has had an adverse effect on teaching and learning (Serder & Ideland, 2016), in the ways PISA has shaped hegemonic discourses in terms of what is 'thinkable' and 'doable' in education (Bonal & Tarabini, 2013), and, how PISA has discursively been utilised as a political tool in shaping educational policies and national educational discourses (Vega Gil et al., 2016).

Pocock (2014) hints at the problems of generalisations and assumptions in education especially with regard to essentialising peoples and/or groups, as Gamboa and Waltenberg (2015) show, PISA relies on a number of generalisations and assumptions about education systems and peoples alike. As a result, there have been a number of studies which have generalised cultural representations of China (Sellar & Lingard, 2013), have led to globally disseminated stereotypes about Asian cultures and Asian education systems (Waldow et al., 2014), how PISA aims to fix, normalise and construct the selves and Other[s] of students in education through its processes and discourses (Shahjahan et al, 2015), and, how PISA education reports can contribute to cultural comparisons in terms of how one country is 'better' than an[other] (Mason, 2014).

Stereotyping and othering in education is not confined to discourses on PISA reports, the languages and discourses one utters contain speech acts constituting one's relationships with one's Others (Bakhtin, 1981). For Bakhtin, a word is born within a dialogue containing 'otherness' and 'our-own-ness' which is constantly re-worked and re-accentuated by one's self. Specifically, 'Othering' refers to a distortion in how Other[s] are represented and understood, usually this refers to logics and/or practices that are ethnocentric and/or racist (Said, 1978). 'Othering' is a discursive construct which has been closely linked to the [re]production of power/knowledge in society especially in its ability to

marginalise, stereotype and discriminate against peoples and/or groups through essentialising identities and/or 'cultures' (Said, 1978).

In Finnish education, from teacher education (Layne & Lipponen, 2016) to kindergarden teacher education (Layne & Dervin, 2016) studies show how categorising in teacher education can reinforce and reproduce societal hierarchies and stereotypes, in addition to the discursive contradictions of how intercultural education is understood and practiced in Finland. Dervin (2015b) problematizes intercultural education in Finland and the contradictions between the omnipresence of discourses on 'intercultural education' and individual utterances. Dervin's intercultural education approach (Dervin, 2016) problematizes 'othering' through offering ways of deconstructing and moving beyond stereotypes and representations which marginalise and discriminate against peoples and/or groups.

**Heteroglossia and ventriloquism as tools for analysing othering in education**

Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) reminds us that within dialogue 'otherness' is constituted by pre-existing meanings (such as ideologies) and that 'otherness' is also contained within the 'intentions present in the other person in the dialogue' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. xx). Bakhtin's approach (Bakhtin, 1981) focuses on discourse, specifically, the use of polyphony (multiple voices) within the multi-layered language system of heteroglossia (What Bakhtin calls 'multi-languagedness' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 274). Heteroglossia is defined as 'word-with-a-loophole', 'word-with-a-sidewards-glance', 'intonational quotation marks' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. xxi). It is the 'base conditions' of any utterances in discourse – the means in which a word uttered in a particular place at a particular time will have a different meaning than it would have under any other conditions – the same word uttered in a different context and time will have a different meaning (Bakhtin, 1981).

Heteroglossia refers to the social speech diversity and language diversity (dialects) of individual utterances – and heteroglossia can also refer to metadiscursive concepts – what Bakhtin would call, 'the socio-ideological' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 299). It is within all speech acts where the heteroglot of diversity can be traced, through and by, multiple voices and multiple dialects within dialogue. When discussing heteroglossia within the novel Bakhtin describes heteroglossia as 'another's speech in another's language' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 324) – Bakhtin here means, a language system in which multi-voiced discourse (characterised by the refracted interplay of who is speaking and the direct intonation of a speaker) is internally dialogized and becomes part of the 'vari-languageness' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 326) which constitutes the

individual utterances of a speaker. In his later book *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (Bakhtin ,1984) Bakhtin shows how the speech of one's own discourse is never one's own, utterances contain speakers' life experiences, identities and, generally, intersectionalities constituted by and through 'the Other[s]-in-the-Self' (Bessant, 2014).

Bakhtin's work on heteroglossia focuses on 'the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263). Ventriloquising (Tannen, 2007) or 'voicing' (Bakhtin, 1981) is when a speaker in a conversation animates [an]other's voice in the presence of an[other] (Tannen, 2010). In this sense, the ventriloquised voices are the dialects of 'social voices' (Bakhtin, 1981). The strategic purpose of is a tactic used to establish dominance or distance oneself from the persona being referred to or the 'object' being ventriloquized (Sullivan, 2016).

Although Bakhtin does not explicitly use the word 'ventriloquise' (from the Latin *venter* (belly) and *loqui* (speak), i.e. *speak from the stomach*) in any of his works, Bubnova and Malcuzynski (2001) show how the words 'ventriloquist/ventriloquism/ventriloqution/ventriloquised' have been adopted by the English translators of *Discourse In The Novel* (Bakhtin, 1981) as the words themselves are not used by Bakhtin in Russian. Nonetheless, as Tannen (2004) notes, a number of scholars have cited Bakhtin on the uses of discursive ventriloquism as 'Bakhtin in spirit' when conducting work on the uses of ventriloquism in discourse (Tannen, 2004; Tannen, 2003). Tannen defines ventriloquising as 'a special case of constructed dialogue in that a ventriloquizing speaker animates another's voice in the presence of that other' (Tannen, 2004, p. 402).

The roles, uses, forms, and legitimacy of 'ventriloquism' in discourse analyses have been discussed by a number of commentators (such as Bartesaghia, 2016; Tagg, 2016; Cooren et al, 2013). Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia shows how discourses are manipulated in the performance of identity and management of relationships (Bakhtin, 1981). Ventriloquism, or ventriloquy, is an act of stagecraft in which a person (a ventriloquist) changes his or her voice so that it appears that the voice is coming from elsewhere, usually a puppeteered 'dummy'. Ventriloquism thus problematizes the question as to who or even what is speaking or, more generally, saying or doing something in a given situation (Cooren et al., 2013).

Arnaut et al., (2015) show how ever-shifting and ever-changing social dynamics transform the discourses, identities, and representations of self and other. Indeed, the complexities and contradictions which

have arisen from globalisation mean that globalisation has an impact on language and communication in terms of how accents, dialects and voices are constantly changing (Blommaert, 2013). As Silverstein (2003) points out, the indexical relations and semiotic codes cannot be isolated from the wider social contexts and forces. 'Indirect indexicality' (Bauman, 2005; Silverstein, 2010) or 'social indexicality' (Silverstein, 2003) relates to the intersubjective field where one's intersectionalities come-into-being, with and through, discursive interactions.

The discourses which constitute one's selves and one's others can be distorted and mediated (Clark and Dervin, 2014). Ventriloquism in some instances can indicate strategies of patronisation which in turn can be a mask for othering (Gülerce, 2014). Examples of ventriloquism as othering include, discourses in organisational settings whereby speakers' co-construct images and discourses with other participants in particular settings (for example, Matte and Cooren, 2015) give the example of Doctors Without Borders). 'Speaker interactions negotiate, construct and reveal perceptions of the face (Haugh, 2013) which can lead to ventriloquised forms of 'facework' such as the construction of leader identities in business meetings (Clifton, 2014), the construction of 'face management' in the field of nurse/practitioner/patient interactions (Defibaugh, 2014), and through ventriloquised (im)politeness strategies and online-media representations (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011). In such situations, speakers' express views of a particular situation depending upon the utterances of the other participants in the conversation (Haugh, 2013). In this sense, facework refers to the interplay of the images of one's self and one's others – the social images one perceives and attributes to can be identified through discourses uttered in conversations.

Ventriloquised utterances in conversations can also reveal speaker intonations such as (hidden) racism, (hidden) discrimination and/or ethnocentrism (See, Bonnett, 2013). Ventriloquism has been linked to racist tendencies in black British poetry (Gilmour, 2014), the racial ventriloquism of white writers (Nguyen, 2013), and, how ventriloquised discourses can (re)produce inaccurate societal myths and act as ideological meta-discourses on a particular country (Lykke, 2016).

To show the potential ventriloquised ethnocentrisms in action, we have selected 5 excerpts and 4 complimentary images. 4 out of the 5 excerpts are taken from the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) 2016 which was held in Mikkeli, Finland in June 2016. IDEC 2016 brought together a number of academics, educators, teachers, students and practitioners together over the course of a week-long international conference. The keynote speakers ranged from 'Democ-

ratic Education experts', activists, and educational academics. 4 out of the 5 excerpts are from keynote speeches and/or question and answer sessions which followed a keynote speech presentation. IDEC 2016 offered the possibility of a rare occurrence: the ability to analyse educational discourses in Finland in the presence of (international) Others. The IDEC 2016 conference offered a rare opportunity for an international delegation of peoples to come to Finland for an education conference, which in turn, offers a rare insight to analyse the discourses uttered by keynote speakers and conference participants on a variety of educational issues. All excerpts and images from IDEC 2016 are accessible in the public domain as most of the conference keynote videos were uploaded online. The one excerpt not taken from IDEC 2016 was excerpt 1, though, excerpt 2 from IDEC 2016 contains discourses uttered by the organiser and facilitator of the project mentioned in this excerpt.

**'Finnish nation-branding' as ventriloquised ethnocentrisms**

Excerpt 1 from the hundrED project gives a good background to the ventriloquized ethnocentrisms that circulate around Finnish education. The project is part of the 100th year anniversary of Finland as an independent state due to take place in 2017. Sponsored by public and private institutions (e.g. the Finnish videogame company Supercell, one of Finland's most reputable companies at the time of writing) and clearly positioned within Finnish nation branding, the strapline of the hundrED project is '100 Finnish innovations, 100 global innovations, 100 visions' (Hundred.fi, 2016). Taken from the 'about' page, hundrED can be described as 'For decades the Finnish school system has been considered one of the best in the world. Recently however, learning outcomes have begun to decline. The goal of HundrED is to help Finland maintain a world-leading education system' (Hundred.fi, 2016). The latter part of the quote is clearly influenced by nation branding discourses (see Dervin, 2015a). Excerpt 1 below is taken from the hundrED 'visions' webpage, the webpage contains a number of comments on Finnish education, and education more broadly, from educational practitioners, academics and policy-makers, within Finland and educational practitioners, academics and policy-makers from other countries.

***Excerpt 1. Taken from www.hundred.fi 'visions'[4].***

*Person A is the Deputy Minister of Education in Taiwan. Person B is the head of Policy and Leadership Studies at National Institute of Education, Singapore. Person C is an international keynote speaker, educator, writer and consultant currently positioned in Sydney, Australia.*

1. Person A – The next hundred years of Finnish education should . . . be able to have its root in Finland, and to 2. be in full blossom worldwide. Finland has a clear direction for curriculum development, it also serves as a 3. role model for global education reforms. In Finland, each child has an equal opportunity for receiving 4. education most appropriate to their needs. Also, they are well-supported by high-quality teachers, and thus 5. achieve a high performance in PISA and TIMSS assessments. We have noticed that Finland stresses 6. Education reforms in cross- area and experiential curricula.

7. Person B - The next 100 years of Finnish education should . . . continue to be an education that the world 8. admires. The foundation of equity will not change in Finland. The foundation of that respect for teachers 9. will not change in Finland. I think other things can change and will evolve, but if some of these basic factors 10. are right then I believe Finnish education will continue to be great. I think you are still an education we . . . 11. admire, and it is regardless of the league positions on any PISA tables. That's what I think.

12. Person C - The next 100 years of Finnish education should . . . look to build on positives. Trying to give 13. Finland advice on education is like trying to give Barcelona advice on football. I would suggest that Finland 14. looks at what it has done well, but that it also takes a step back and looks at its education system in a broader 15. context.

In the arena of ventriloquism, the speakers have been chosen *a priori*, 'ventriloquism consists in giving voice to those in whose name one is authorized to speak' (Bourdieu, 1991 in Kendall and Nouwen, 2014, p. 236). In this sense, ventriloquism acts as hegemonic meta-discourse – the experts already know what to utter on 'Finnish education' – the ventriloquist is simultaneously omnipresent, omnipotent, and, omniscient – A discursive 'God'. Thus the 'expert voices' are quick to generalise and reproduce stereotypes about Finnish education. Phrases such as 'role model' (line 3), 'high quality teachers' (line 4), 'high performance in PISA' (line 5), 'admires' (line 8 and line 11), 'respect for teachers' (line 8), 'great' (line 10) combined with the lexical phrase/football analogy (lines 12 and 13) reinforces a number of generalisations and assumptions about what the speaker believes s/he is speaking about. These utterances simultaneously mean everything and nothing – a potential chain of empty signifiers (Laclau, 2005).

Perhaps, though, these excerpts show how discourses on Finnish education can (re)produce discourses of cultural othering (Dervin, 2016; Said, 1978). Here one can see how the ventriloquist manipulates the voices of the puppet – the nation branding of Finnish education (Schatz et al., 2015). This means that when Others (culturally, linguistically, socially, geographically etc.) speak about 'Finnish education' they automatically (re)produce their own positions of marginalisation by reciting ethnocentric images of Finland, such as, [The next 100 years of

Finnish education] 'should be able to have its root in Finland, and be able to be in full blossom worldwide' (line 1 and line 2). Here the ventriloquist barely has to move their lips. Such statements (re)produce othering through discursively positioning Finland against other countries and cultures (in this example, Singapore) through discourses of 'admiration' and 'worship', Speaker B utters 'I think you are an education system we admire' (line 10 and line 11). Showing discursive 'admiration' and 'hype' about a particular country and/or culture can normalise attitudes/beliefs about one country and/or culture being 'better' than an[other] frames discourses on how 'Finland' is perceived internationally, these tendencies can be seen as patronising to others, thus further marginalising differing cultures and/or countries (Rich & Awaken, 2015). Whether Speakers A, B, and, C are being 'polite' one does not know, but the utterances they speak can reinforce cultural othering through offering a romanticised vision of a particular country, such as Finland. It is also important to note that the reproduced ventriloquations on the website are part of larger discourses that were uttered during interviews. Through a selective process the team behind hundrED has decided to show these discourses only.

Excerpt 2 is a speech extract taken from an IDEC 2016 keynote speech in Mikkeli Finland. The keynote speaker is the coordinator and facilitator of the project described in excerpt 1. In this instance, the speaker is giving a keynote presentation at an international education conference. The conference brought an international audience to Finland and offers a rare insight into the interplay of discourses and images when discussing 'Finnish education'.

***Excerpt 2. Keynote Speaker (i) 'The next hundred years of Finnish education' at IDEC 2016.***

1. Keynote Speaker - At the same time we are looking at PISA results, for example, Finland has been famous 2. of its PISA results and then we went to the English school of Helsinki and asked the students what do you 3. think of the PISA results and this is what they said.

4. School student - A word test? I don't know! [laughs] . . . Something about Italy because of the Pisa tower [laughs].

5. Keynote Speaker - So the things we are, we are looking in the education can be totally irrelevant for the 6. students in our [laughs] education system and that sort of paradox of how we are evaluating our education 7. systems and how we are involving students in that process.

Excerpt 2 shows an extract from a keynote speech entitled 'The next hundred years of Finnish education' at IDEC 2016. The excerpt shows a denial of the 'Finnish nation-branding' surrounding its education system and PISA reports. The keynote speaker utters the word 'irrelevant' (line 5) and 'laughs' (line 6) when the student gives an 'ignorant' re-

sponse (line 4) to a question on the importance of PISA. Here, the response of the student (line 4) combined with the laughter of the student (twice on line 4) is echoed by the laughter of the keynote speaker (line 6). Laughter here is strategically utilised as 'facework' (Jwa, 2016; Haugh, 2013) to deliberately manage and frame this set of discourse – the idea that PISA is 'irrelevant' (line 5).

Using Excerpts 1 and 2, and, images 1 and 2 below our argument here is that ventriloquised discourses require temporal simultaneity and spatial continuity, though that is not to say, as an inverse effect, a number of distorted and sometimes contradictory supplementary discourses can develop (Inoue, 2011). Images 1 and 2 are taken from a keynote presentation by a leading Finnish educator at a conference in Seoul, South Korea in August 2016 (Pasisahlberg.com, 2016).

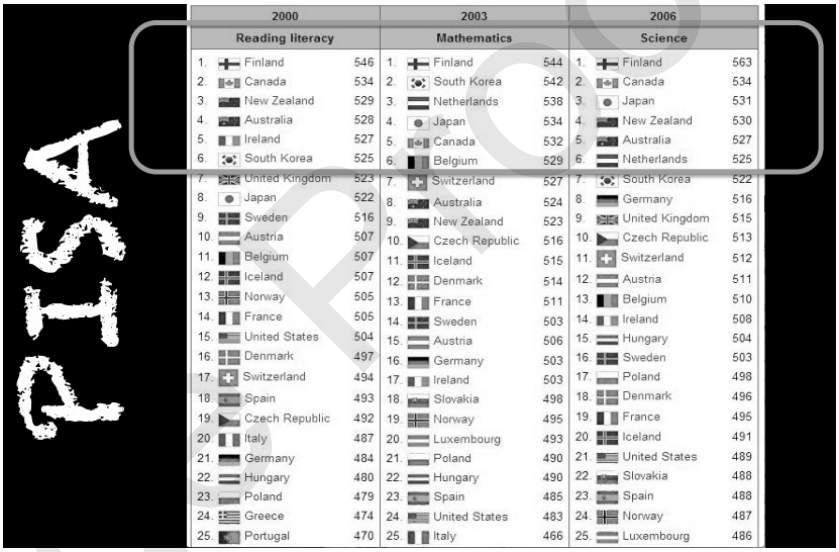


***Image 1. Presentation slide taken from 'The Changing Nature of Education: Lessons from Successful Education Systems' at Global Education Forum Seoul, South Korea. 18th August 2016.***

Images 1 and 2 reinforce the images and discourses of 'Finnish education' being the 'best' educational system in the world. These logics and ideas reinforce the nation-branding strategies from the Ministry of Education and Culture as discussed previously. In 2015 the conference speaker wrote an article calling for PISA to be reformed, the title of the publication was 'The tower of PISA is badly leaning. An argument for why it should be saved' (*Washington Post*, 2015). Yet as one can see from image 1 and image 2 – when talking to an international audience at an international conference (for example, in South Korea), the speaker

quotes the PISA OECD reports making reference to the fact that in these publications Finland is regarded as one of the 'best' education systems in the world (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2004, OECD, 2007; OECD, 2010). Here once again, one can reveal ventriloquised ethnocentrisms behind international discourses on 'Finnish education', that despite making reference for the need to reform PISA assessments the author continues to reproduce and make reference to the same publications which show Finland as 'a high performing country'. Tannen (2007) drawing on Bakhtin (1981) reminds us, that 'ventriloquising' is when a speaker animates another's voice in the presence of that other – in this sense, when confronted at an international conference within Finland (such as IDEC, 2016), or by speaking at an international conference in a culturally different place about Finnish education (such as South Korea) both speakers animate the other – they give the other what they believe the other wishes to hear – that Finland has the 'best education system'. Ethnocentrism can be understood as a belief system whereby one's own way of life is better than other countries/cultures (Spivak, 2010). In this sense, these ventriloquised utterances are ethnocentric as they reinforce the hegemonic discourses Finnish education through 'worshipping' Finnish education vis a vis other countries and cultures (excerpt 1) and, in the face of others, through (re)producing stereotypes and generalisations about Finnish education (excerpt 2, image 1 and image 2). Interestingly what this presents us with is some form of oxymoron, i.e. contradictory ideas that appear in conjunction: while denying somehow within the same context or in other texts the importance of PISA studies, the speakers still promote Finnish education as an example to follow.

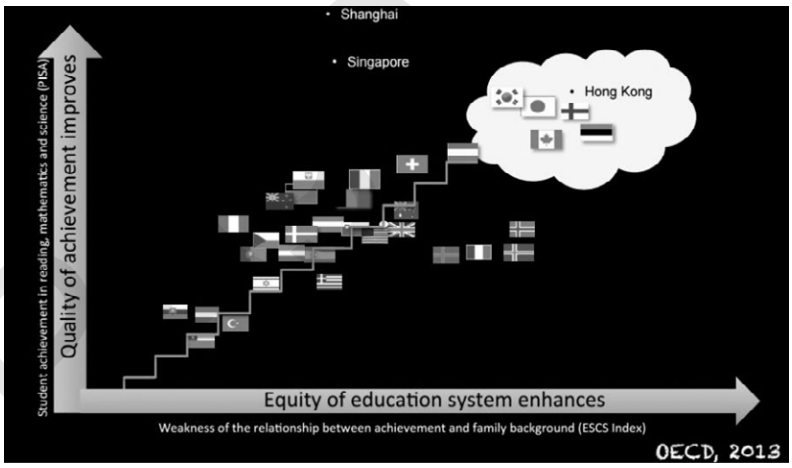


***Image 2. Presentation slide taken from 'The Changing Nature of Education: Lessons from Successful Education Systems' at Global Education Forum Seoul, South Korea. 18th August 2016.***

The next set of excerpts are taken from the IDEC 2016 conference held in Mikkeli, Finland in June 2016. Excerpt 3 is from an 'introductions video' whereby the conference organisers introduced the keynote section of the conference. Excerpt 3 is from a conference co-organiser who works for the main partner organisations as a liberal adult education teacher.

**The puppet[s] in the room: Discursive strategies of ethnocentric ventriloquism**

Below is an excerpt from a Finnish co-organiser of IDEC 2016. Speaker A is a liberal adult education teacher who works for one of the co-organisers of the conference. Speaker A is addressing the conference at the start of the keynote programme.

***Excerpt 3: IDEC 2016 introductions***

1. Speaker A: My name is _____ and I am from _____. _____ is a folk high school and we have been 2. working over a hundred years. Our field is to help . . erm . . . young people in their lives, education, to give 3. education and to support. Most of the young people who come to us are those that are not supported well 4. enough by the official system. In the early days, many of those youngsters came from very poor families 5. and from rural areas. Nowadays many of our students are the newcomers to Finland they are seeking here, 6. security and education and that is what we are giving them. So alternative ways to give education is our 7. field. And, that is how, that is why, democratic education is very interesting to us. So we are very happy to 8. be able to help, to organise this IDEC international democratic conference here in Finland and _____ wants 9. to warmly welcome each of you to this conference and these keynote days. Please enjoy these wonderful 10. speeches we have today. Once again, welcome everybody.

Excerpt 3 shows how the discourses of being 'very poor' (line 4) and from 'rural areas' (line 5) is combined with discourses on 'newcomers to Finland' (line 5). The speaker is constantly switching the code and voice of their utterances throughout the extract. For example, the speaker utters 'we' (line 1, line 6, line 10), 'our' (line 2 and line 5), 'they' (line 5), 'them' (line 6), 'us' (line 7), 'you' (line 9). The constant shifts reveal a number of ventriloquy at work. This simple extract shows that, when confronted by and with others, the ways one's voices shift depend upon the audience the speaker is aiming to address. For example, the speaker utters 'newcomers to Finland they are seeking here security, and education and that is what we are giving them' (line 5 and line 6) combined with the utterance 'So we are very happy to help' (line 7 and line 8), marks the accentuation of the speakers' previous utterance – that people coming to Finland need 'security' (line 6), however the speaker does not explain how, why, and who needs to be 'secure' or the kind of security Finland can provide (or if the Nordic country can pro-

vide it at all). Indeed, who are 'we' to declare or define the types of security one needs? The ventriloquisms of the speakers' utterances reveal a simplistic and generalised understanding of peoples and cultures, the speaker juxtaposes 'them' (line 6) and 'us' (line 7) as culturally different engendering boundaries and stereotypes in the process (Winter, 2014; Vinkenburg, 2014). Vinkenburg (2014) shows how such utterances in 'everyday language' can normalise othering. Speaker A's utterances mark othering (Dervin, 2016) and facework (Haugh, 2013), here, when faced by others, the ventriloquist shows their hidden hand. Words which might come across as 'sympathetic' actually can be interpreted as discriminatory and patronising.

Excerpt 4 is taken from an IDEC 2016 keynote presentation called 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?'. The presentation speaker is an academic from Finland in the field of educational psychology. The excerpt shows the interplay of significantly relevant discourses on 'democracy' and 'Finnish education', discourses that are often not easy to analyse together in the same context and situation.

***Excerpt 4: IDEC 2016 keynote presentation (ii) 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?'***

*This keynote presentation was 45 minutes long and for the purposes of this study we only included the utterances we deemed relevant. Our transcription and analysis starts part way through the presentation.*

> 1. Many of us are shy and reserved...there is this saying, what is the difference between the introverted Finn 2. and the extroverted Finn, do you know that? When you are talking to an introverted Finn she is looking at 3. her shoes and when you are talking to an extroverted Finn she is looking at your shoes.
>
> [presentation continues]

In addressing the IDEC 2016 conference on 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?' the speaker utters haphazard stereotypes on Finland by rehearsing a famous joke about Finns (line 1 to line 3; see Vaara et al., 2003: 75). However, previous to these utterances, at the start of the keynote presentation, the speaker explains: 'cultural competencies, I am afraid we are not very good at that, there are countries like Canada, New Zealand, other countries . . . erm even Sweden that are much more advanced when it comes to intercultural competencies'. Here the speakers' first utterance (about 'Finland not being very good at intercultural competencies') could serve and justify the later stereotypes and generalisations (line 1 to line 3) by making the excuse that Finland is not a very interculturally competent place. This reinforces stereotypes about Finnish people through engen-

dering a 'discursive contact zone' constructed to generalise peoples and/or groups (Rutten et al., 2013). Later in the presentation the speaker then talks about their new research projects.

> 4. I recently became . . . I started working in Africa in South Africa and Namibia and we have projects that are 5. sort of community based psychology, which means that erm . . . research focus where I am working _____ is 6. not a very fancy university it's black people's university and . . . erm my research my research group is trying 7. to help unemployed youth and making innovative things there. This is one of the so called oasis in 'Orange 8. Farm' near Johannesburg Pretoria kind of area which is very challenging but they built this learning 9. centre there and this writing is on the wall "Be the change you wish to see in the world – Mahatma Gandhi" 10. and there are….
>
> *[Speaker switches to Image 1 on the presentation slide]*
>
> 11. Actually they promised that I take this picture of unemployed youth of the area and they come to this centre, . . . 12. nobody is asking for diplomas but they learn to make web pages in 2 weeks. Erm… and then 10 of these 13. young people already got jobs but they did not have very much prospects in their own community selling 14. drugs, prostitution, all kinds of problems that were very obvious…obvious choices…erm because 15. unemployment rates were very high. And there is also, I can talk about this endlessly…
>
> *[Speaker switches to Image 2 on the presentation slide]*

***Image 3. 'Orange farm South Africa' used in 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?' at IDEC 2016.***

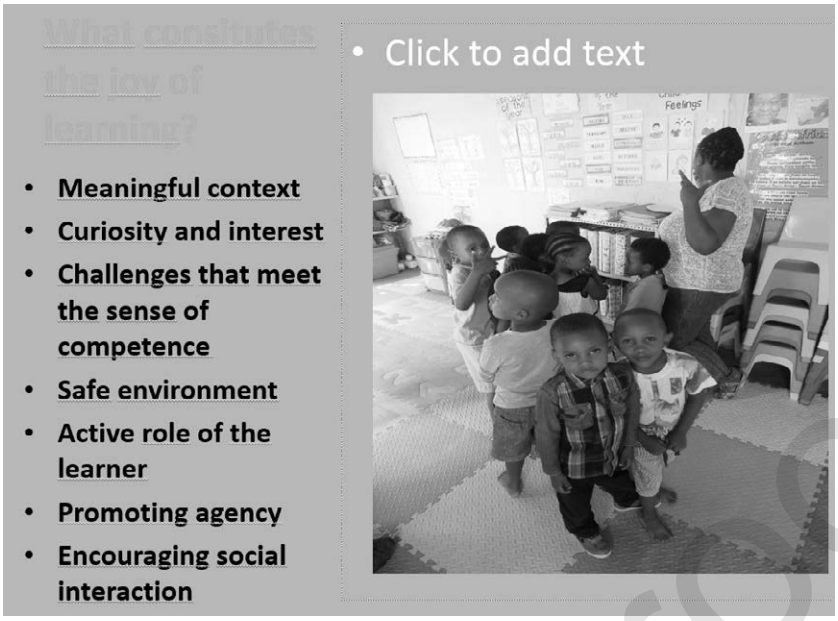


***Image 4. A slide from the presentation 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?' at IDEC 2016***

The keynote presenter utters 'it is not a very fancy university it's [a] black people's university' (line 6) whilst then describing the name of the project in South Africa as 'Orange Farm' (line 7 and line 8). The speakers' utterances are an interplay of ventriloquism, the speaker is faced with a number of others (the South African other; the international participants at the conference; others within Finland; the others within the self etc.). Mixed between discourses on the role education plays in developing society the speaker labels the University in South Africa as a black 'peoples' university' (line 6) and the discourses of going to 'help' (line 7), reinforces logics and discourses of black victimhood and white saviours (Straubhaar, 2015). The utterances of 'Orange Farm' (line 8) as an 'oasis' (line 7) shows how 'blackness' is othered as 'exotic' as juxtaposed to the 'whiteness of everyday' (Spracklen, 2013). These discourses combined with Image 3 convey particularly worrying imagery considering South Africa's colonial past. As such under colonial reign South Africa was called the Orange Free State between 1854-1902, under South African apartheid the area the speaker makes reference to the Highveld/ Sotho-Tswana area of South Africa (The speaker utters Johannesburg and Pretoria on line 8) – was previously called Orange Free State Province between 1910-1994. With this in mind, the labelling of 'Orange Farm' (Image 3 and Image 4) and utterances of 'black people' (line 6) (re)produce images of colonialism and

apartheid in South Africa. The speaker goes on to use a much rehearsed quote by Gandhi (line 9), which can be interpreted as tokenism and the identity construction of others (Hatoss, 2012). Moreover, using such token figures of 'good human rights' and/or 'human rights exemplars' can reveal hidden ways of (re)producing othering as it reinforces boundaries between the self and our others (Smallwood, 2015). Here, ventriloquism (Tannen, 2010) can indicate hidden attitudes/beliefs characterised by the speakers' utterances of 'very obvious…obvious choices' (line 14), 'obvious choices' precedes 'very obvious' indicating an afterthought that 'selling drugs and prostitution' (line 13 and 14) are 'choices'. Here, as we already know from line 6, the speaker is willing to generalise what a 'black people's university' is (line 6), and the speaker ventriloquises an ethical judgment, that some people's previous life decisions are a judged as a 'choice' (line 14). These discourses typically symbolise ventriloquised ethnocentrisms.

Following the presentation, the speaker engaged with the audience in a question and answer format. Excerpt 5 shows the dialogue when the speaker is challenged by a South African citizen from the audience about the utterances the speaker made in their presentation.

***Excerpt 5. IDEC 2016 Keynote presentation 'How can education play a role in developing democracy in society?' Q and A***

1. Speaker A - Hello I am ____ from South Africa and thank you very much for the thing you highlighted I am 2. also a student of _____ I have done an education diploma. Through your research, and the crisis that South 3. Africa is facing in education especially in the rural area do you think it is going to take us 5 to 10 years to 4. change or it will take me another century because South Africa is called a democratic country but in 5. education I really don't find it, thank you.

6. Keynote Speaker - erm…. I didn't have time to talk about our latest project it is called sustainable education 7. design. And actually what we are now doing is building an ecological wooden school which would be 8. reasonably cost efficient with solar panels so it makes the possible of having WI-FI even in rural areas but 9. we are building, erm… pilot in Windhoek area [Namibia] and then thinking of scaling it up to more rural 10. areas erm… Finland has very old relations to Ovamboland there is a lot of erm…there is a lot of goodwill 11. to start that in Namibia and I am hoping it will spread and there are other similar projects and what we 12. think is we need to have this whole package where we have pedagogy, technologies, ecological solutions 13. for energy [laughs] and to scale it up as much as we can …erm… usually export….the problem is always 14. you have to be very culturally sensitive you cannot go and say this is a Finnish school you have to go there 15. and live with the people and I have noticed that how student activating pedagogies they already have, for 16. instance, in Orange Farm preschools erm… so I think there is a

> lot of fertile soil [laughs] to do this kinds 17. of things and I know many people doing many good things but…I, I really when I went there I was with 18. all of this ideological thinking I can see that there are lots of challenges.

Excerpt 5 shows the interaction between the keynote speaker and a member of the audience. Speaker A's question and comments (line 1 to line 5) are barely responded to by the in the Keynote Speaker's response (line 6 to line 18). In this sense, ventriloquism can be utilised as a conversational evasion tactic (Pollard, 2012), whereby another voice responds to another's question. The Keynote Speaker fails to answer any of Speaker A's points and even makes reference to a different country – Namibia (line 9). On line 13 the Speaker utters a number of ventriloquised utterances which are disjointed from the rest of the discourse, the Speaker utters 'usually export' (line 13) which is a standalone utterance disjointed from any previous or proceeding utterances. Moreover, the Speaker utters 'I think there is a lot of fertile soil [laughs]' (line 16), here, the use of an idiom followed by laughter characterises facework (Haugh, 2013) and embarrassment as the Keynote Speaker is completely unable to control their ventriloquised utterances, as presumably, the Keynote Speaker might not know what s/he is talking about.

**Discussion and conclusion**

Following Bakhtin (1981), Cooren, (2014; 2012), Cooren et al. (2013), Tannen (2010; 2007; 2004; 2004) and others have shown the discursive functions, forms, and strategies of ventriloquised discourses. Speakers verbally position themselves as other speakers in other contexts (Tannen, 2007). With that in mind, the differing faces of the self can be interpreted through the refracted speech of 'voicing' (Bakhtin, 1981).

Bakhtin (1981) reminds us that the discourses one utters contain the words of one's others. Ventriloquism has been strategically deployed as an ideological meta-discourse, so that anytime someone somewhere utters 'Finnish education' the first things which spring to mind are 'educational success', 'PISA rankings', 'respected teachers' etc. Through the constructs of evasion, othering, facework, and discourse framing, we have uncovered some examples of racial stereotyping, cultural ignorance, notwithstanding, generalisations and assumptions about a number of differing countries and/or cultures while describing Finnish education.

This paper has shown that ventriloquised discourses can be utilised in a number of ways in discourses about current educational utopias, using Finland as an example. Ventriloquised discourses have been

shown to be operative in a number of differing settings of 'Finnish education'. Through the logics of 'Finnish nation-branding' ventriloquism has been used to cover up ethnocentric logics and sentiments. Ventriloquism has been achieved through a number of discursive means, including, (re)producing international discourses on the successes of Finnish education at international education conferences, through the way others are perceived and discussed at education conferences, and, generally, the way others are discussed within the Finnish context. Ethnocentrisms become ventriloquised when they are refracted among the meta-discourses on 'Finland' and 'Finnish education', thus, at first glance ventriloquised ethnocentrisms can go undetected. Yet, it is through ventriloquism that one can trace discourses of ethnocentrism shown through refracted utterances.

Within Finland educators, academics, teachers and policy-makers need to do much more, in terms of how different cultures and/or countries are discussed and represented through discourse. These extracts show that behind the discourses on 'PISA' and 'Finnish education' uttered by practitioners within the field are ventriloquised ethnocentrisms. These discourses marginalise and discriminate by generalising and stereotyping against people from different countries and/or cultures.

One potential area of research educators, teachers and policy-makers could be pointed towards in developing competencies to detect and prevent othering, stereotyping, and, ethnocentrisms, is intercultural education (Clark and Dervin, 2014) and intercultural communication studies (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013).

This paper has revealed a number of causes of concern, that behind the 'hype' and meta-discourses on the Finnish education system can lie possible sentiments of (hidden) xenophobia, (hidden) racism, and, (hidden) ethnocentrisms.

## Note

[i] Note that all the excerpts are verbatim, without any attempt to correct them.

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